

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, XL, CH, UR, KS, KN, JA, IT

SUBJECT: SOVIET-ITALIAN POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS ON ASIA

REF: ROME 6129 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: DURING SOVIET-ITALIAN POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS ON ASIA HELD IN ROME APRIL 23-24, THE SOVIET SIDE PROVIDED THE ITALIANS WITH AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN CHINA. SOVIETS ALSO REAFFIRMED THEIR INTEREST IN AN ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY AGREEMENT, DENIED ANY INTENTION TO GRANT DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION TO SOUTH KOREA, AND EXPRESSED INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH JAPAN DESPITE THE IMPASSE OVER THE KURILE ISLANDS QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CHIEF OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS' ASIAN DESK FRANCESCO LO PRINZI (ZGDS-1) HAS SHARED WITH US THE MINISTRY'S SUMMARY OF THE RECENT ASIAN POLITICAL CONSULTATION CONDUCTED WITH A SOVIET DELEGATION LED BY MIKHAIL KAPITSA, AN ASIAN EXPERT FROM THE SOVIET MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE PRINCIPAL POINTS STRESSED BY KAPITSA ARE SET FORTH BELOW.

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2. CHINA. THE SOVIETS SEE SOME WEAKENING IN THE POSITION OF MAO TSE-TUNG WITH RESULTING TENSIONS WITHIN CHINESE LEADERSHIP CIRCLES. THEY BELIEVE THAT THE PRAGMATISTS, SUPPORTED BY THE MILITARY, NOW HAVE THE UPPER HAND OVER MAO AND THE "SHANGHAI GROUP" AS A RESULT OF THE DECISIONS CONFIRMED BY THE FOURTH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS. (THE SOVIETS ATTRIBUTE THE MILITARY'S POSITION TO THEIR LOSS OF POWER WITHIN THE PARTY AND TO THEIR CONCERN OVER FAILURE TO EXPEDITE UPDATING OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT.)

3. THE SOVIETS DIFFER WITH OBSERVERS WHO ARGUE THAT VICE PREMIER AND VICE PARTY CHAIRMAN TEN HSIAO PING IS CLOSELY ALLIED TO PREMIER CHOU. THEY SUSPECT HE HAS TIES TO CHAIRMAN MAO WHO WOULD LIKE TO HAVE HIM EVENTUALLY REPLACE CHOU.

4. IN THE COURSE OF HIS ANTI-CHINESE DIATRIBES, KAPITSA ARGUED THAT THE WEST DOES NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE SINO-SOVIET SPLIT. THESE STEM FROM A CHINESE NEED TO CREATE ANTI-SOVIETISM FOR INTERNAL USE AS THEIR DOMESTIC IDEOLOGICAL PROPAGANDA IS INSUFFICIENT TO STIR THE PEOPLE. AT THE SAME TIME, KAPITSA CAUTIONED THAT THE CHINESE USE FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES THE SOVIET-CAPITALIST WORLD SPLIT. HE ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER CHINESE EXPANSIONIST PLANS, FIRST INTO SOUTHEAST ASIA AND LATER INTO SOUTH ASIA.

6. KAPITSA, IN AN ASIDE, ALSO REFERRED TO AN ALLEGED ATTEMPT TO POISON CHOU. ALTHOUGH HE WAS VAGUE ON THE DETAILS, THE ITALIANS HAD THE IMPRESSIONS THAT THE REPORTED EVENT TOOK PLACE REASONABLY RECENTLY.

7. ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY. KAPITSA ARGUED THAT AN ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY AGREEMENT IS THE ONLY MEANS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THAT AREA WHICH HAS SEEN "40 ARMED CONFLICTS" SINCE WORLD WAR II. HE STRESSED THAT CHINA MUST BE A PARTY TO THIS VENTURE IN ORDER FOR IT TO SUCCEED AND NOTED THAT THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED.

7. KOREA. ACCORDING TO KAPITSA, THE USSR NOW HAS NO INTENTION OF RECOGNIZING SOUTH KOREA. THIS POSITION STEMS
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FROM SOVIET OPPOSITION TO THE POLICIES OF THE PARK REGIME AS WELL AS FROM THE ATTITUDE OF THE NORTH KOREANS WHO STRONGLY OPPOSE SUCH A MOVE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE USSR CONTINUES TO OPPOSE UN ADMISSION FOR THE TWO KOREAS. KAPITSA VOICED APPROVAL FOR THE NORTH KOREAN DESIRE TO WORK FOR THE UNIFICATION OF KOREA IN A PEACEFUL AND DEMOCRATIC MANNER.

8. JAPAN. KAPITSA ATTRIBUTED THE IMPROVED SINO-JAPANESE

RELATIONS TO THE JAPANESE DESIRE FOR ACCESS TO RAW MATERIALS
FOR THEIR INDUSTRY. HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS DOUBT THAT THE
JAPANESE WISH TO TIE THEMSELVES TO ONE SOURCE OF SUPPLY AND
CONSEQUENTLY DO NOT SEE A LESSENING IN JAPANESE INTEREST
IN ACCESS TO RAW MATERIALS IN THE SOVIET FAR EAST. KAPITSA
ADDED THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THE "CAPRICIOUSNESS" OF THE
JAPANESE AND THEIR LACK OF REALISM ON THE KURILE ISLANDS
QUESTION, THE SOVIETS HOPE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH JAPAN.
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